

Earlier this week Captain Pechacek was seriously injured as his car was crushed and knocked on to its side by a drunk driver. Within minutes, fire fighters from Pechacek's own station arrived on the scene to rescue the injured driver from the wreck, not even knowing at first that the injured driver was their own captain.

Now, Captain Pechacek's fellow fire-fighters are keeping a vigil at the hospital, during which they have organized a blood drive to help him and others and volunteered to help Captain Pechacek's son with his homework in his father's absence.

We all wish Captain Pechacek a full and speedy recovery and his family strength during this difficult time. And to all those Las Vegas firefighters, we commend you on your heroism and loyalty.

Finally, I would like to end with a comment made by Las Vegas Fire Chief Mario Trevino. He said that they "always treat an accident like it was our mother or father or sister or brother. This time it really was."

JOHN LENNON MURDERER WANTS FREEDOM

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, John Lennon's murderer says he should be set free, and even John Lennon, who was a liberal, would agree he should be set free.

Think about it. Chapman said, "My mental illness is over. I am eating, I am breathing, I am even singing and playing the guitar."

Now, if that is not enough to throw up, let us remember Chapman's testimony. "I asked Lennon for his autograph. He gave it to me. It was a ploy. I killed him. It was not his signature I wanted, I wanted his life."

Beam me up. Mark Chapman deserves an electric chair, not an electric guitar.

I yield back the fact that America, that tolerates murderers like Mark Chapman, is an America that promotes and tolerates more murderers.

I yield back the life of John Lennon.

COMMENDING DR. CARLOTTA MORALES, PRINCIPAL OF SAINT AGATHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL, MIAMI, FLORIDA

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to commend Dr. Carlotta Morales, the Principal of Saint Agatha Catholic School in my hometown of Miami.

Through her hard work and dedication, Dr. Morales has upgraded her school's facilities, advanced the education of her students, and improved

the relationship between students, faculty and parents.

Dr. Morales has shown us what can be achieved with a positive attitude and a firm belief in self-reliance.

For her wonderful leadership in both her school and our community, Dr. Morales has been honored by both the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the Department of Education by being named one of this year's national distinguished principals.

Through her work, Dr. Morales demonstrates that our children are our Nation's most important assets, and her fine work on behalf of South Florida's youngsters is a shining example to be followed by educators everywhere.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Carlotta Morales as she continues her wonderful work at Saint Agatha Catholic school in Miami.

INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today I continue in my effort to bring to this House's attention my deepest concern for American families destroyed by cases of international child abduction. Since February I have been coming to the floor to tell the stories of the over 10,000 American children who have been abducted abroad.

Today I will tell the story of Ms. Ildiko Gerbatsch and her two daughters, Naomi, who is 13, and her younger sister, Isabelle, who is now 10.

In the summer of 1977, Naomi and Isabelle visited their father in Germany. The parents had divorced in 1994, and Ms. Gerbatsch had complied with the California Superior Court's decision allowing the father visitation rights. At the end of the children's visiting time, the father failed to return the children to their mother in the United States.

To this date and after 3 years of legal disputes costing close to \$100,000 in legal fees, the mother now has full custody of both children, but only on paper. Ms. Gerbatsch has only been allowed to visit with Naomi and Isabelle on three occasions. She has been mistreated by the German courts, who have failed to comply with the Hague Treaty.

Mr. Speaker, I come back to the floor for these daily one minutes because I care about families and reuniting children and parents. Let us make it our duty to place pressure on the countries that are the Hague signatories and who choose not to abide by the Hague Treaty.

I urge my colleagues to join me in spreading the message and taking a responsible role in bringing our children home.

VICE PRESIDENT AND MARRIAGE PENALTY TAX RELIEF

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, Vice President AL GORE, who once claimed he invented the Internet, now has an equally incredible claim, that he will get rid of the marriage penalty. The marriage penalty forces married couples to pay higher taxes than they would if they were single. Simply put, the marriage penalty is a tax on marriage.

The Vice President's proposal does not repeal the marriage penalty for all marriage penalty victims. The Vice President's plan only helps couples who take the standard deduction. That means that you would only get the marriage penalty reduction if you do not itemize your taxes.

In other words, under the Vice President's scheme, you will not get one penny of marriage penalty tax relief if you own a home and deduct your mortgage interest, if you donate to your church and other charities and deduct your contributions, if you own property and deduct your real estate or property taxes, if you deduct your State and local income taxes, if your spouse or child is ill and you deduct skyrocketing medical bills, or if you work at home and deduct the cost of your home office.

No one, Mr. Speaker, should be subjected to higher taxes simply because they are married. Taxing marriage is wrong. It is wrong whether a couple itemizes their taxes or not.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the American people, e-mail Vice President GORE, tell him to get it right. He did so well on the Internet, he should be able to do so well on the marriage penalty.

THE SURPLUS AND MEDICARE

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, this week we have had some interesting events. We were treated to a video coverage of Mr. Bush, Governor Bush, who is running for the Presidency, who was saying what a wonderful set of cuts were made in 1997 on Medicare, the Gingrich proposal to produce \$270 billion that could be used for \$270 billion worth of tax cuts.

Now we have the majority leader talking here about the marriage tax penalty. Why did they not do it in 1997? Well, they had some other rich folks they wanted to take care of before they got to the middle class folks in this country.

Tomorrow in the Committee on Ways and Means, for the third time, we are going to go back and shovel money back into the Medicare plan that was taken out in 1997. They are going to